DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 289 820 SP 029 567

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TITLE An English Perspective on Inservice: A Comparative Analysis to Practices and Views in the United States.
PUB DATE 22 Nov 87
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council of States on Inservice Education (San Diego, CA, November 20-24, 1987).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Attitudes; Comparative Analysis; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; *Inservice Teacher Education; *Program Design; *Program Effectiveness; Staff Development; *Teacher Participation
IDENTIFIERS *England; *United States

ABSTRACT

The study was designed to analyze and compare inservice attitudes and practices in England to selected United States schools identified as having outstanding programs. Perceptions of chief education officers in English government schools were compared to those of selected superintendents in United States schools regarding inservice concepts and practices. Data revealed agreement on several items regarding importance and practice of inservice concepts while differing perceptions and practices were also found. English respondents reported greater emphasis than their American counterparts upon the following: (1) programs should have written desired outcomes; (2) sessions should involve "hands-on" activities; (3) inservice should be required for all new staff; and (4) university based courses were more likely to be used for inservice. On the other hand, United States superintendents reported greater emphasis upon the following: (1) teachers were provided administrative support following inservice; (2) teachers were involved in planning inservice activities; (3) follow-up materials were provided; (4) sessions were designed to meet teacher needs; (5) participation was more likely to be mandatory; and (6) teachers were more likely to view inservice as a burden. Study participants concluded that systematic inservice is a means to foster excellence. (Author/JD)

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A Paper Presented
at

The National Council of States on Inservice Education
Annual Meeting

November 22, 1987
San Diego, California

SP 029567

AN ENGLISH PERSPECTIVE ON INSERVICE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS TO PRACTICES AND VIEWS IN THE UNITED STATES

The purpose of this paper is to compare perceptions and practices of inservice activities in both the United States and England. Admittedly, there are many cultural factors to be considered when international research is conducted. This information should be analyzed with the understanding that although Americans and their English counterparts speak the same basic language, many educational differences exist.

The 1986 England research project emerged from a United States national study conducted in 1985 involving the superintendents from 184 school districts in the United States. These selected school districts were identified by state department of education personnel in each of the fifty states as having outstanding staff development programs. The English sample consisted of 90 educational administrators, primarily chief education officers, representing most of the shires in England.

The same basic survey instrument was used for both studies, although several modifications were made when the questionnaire was field tested in England. Several questions were deleted since selected concepts such as teacher evaluation were not widespread in English schools. The study focused only upon United Kingdom supported schools in England because the educational structure of government schools in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland is different when compared to English schools.

This study was assisted and made possible by colleagues at the Department of Educational Studies, Oxford University and Westminster College, Oxford, England. Questionnaires were mailed in England, returned to Oxford, collected and then sent to the United States for tabulation and data analysis. Computer printouts were then returned to Oxford for further analysis and interpretation. Combined data from the 1985 study of American school districts and the data from the 1986 England study were computer analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS-X) Program. The response rate for United States school districts was 81 percent of those surveyed, compared to a 44 percent response of all chief education officers in England. The data revealed a number of interesting similarities and noted differences.

Perusal of the literature confirms that an effective inservice program is composed of a number of component parts. These include: a comprehensive needs assessment, staff input into planning, participation of personnel in conducting activities, delivery systems compatible with adult learning theories, support and reinforcement of teachers following staff development activities, and evaluation of program and teacher developed competencies following implementation.

One of the most basic concepts of staff development and inservice education is the concept of involving teachers in planning inservice and assessment of staff needs. This comparative study found that teachers in the United States were more likely to be involved in planning inservice than their English counterparts (see Figure 1). Only 44 percent of the

English respondents reported that teachers were involved in planning, compared to 85 percent of the United States sample. Needs assessments were conducted in nearly 84 percent of the United States districts surveyed, but in less than half of the English districts.

A series of questions were asked pertaining to inservice activities meeting teacher needs, increasing student achievement, and improving teacher instructional skills. English and U.S. administrators were asked if inservice sessions were designed to meet teacher needs. Over 54 percent of U.S. superintendents and 17 percent of the English administrators indicated that inservice was designed to meet the needs of teachers. When asked if inservice activities had developed teacher skills to increase student achievement, 77 percent of American superintendents and 54 percent of English administrators stated that inservice developed teacher skills to increase student achievement. The belief that inservice had improved teacher instructional skills was much greater in the U.S. with nearly 67 percent of the American superintendents stating that inservice had enhanced or improved teacher instructional skills. In contrast, only 18 percent of the English respondents reported that inservice improved instructional skills.

The organization and delivery of inservice activities plays an important role in the success or failure of such activities. According to administrators from the two countries, teachers in the United States were more likely to have organizational input such as selection of the time and place for inservice activities

(U.S. 52.7%, England 39.2%). Hands-on-activities or workshops often contribute to successful adult learning experiences. While this particular concept has been advocated in the literature, only 64 percent of the U.S. superintendents and 48 percent of the English respondents stated that this was the usual practice. Written programs with stated outcomes are also an important part of inservice programs. Written programs were more likely to be in effect in England with nearly 74 percent of the respondents indicating that districts featured written inservice programs with desired outcomes. Sixty-nine (69) percent of the superintendents in the U.S. reported districts had written programs with desired outcomes. Associated with successful inservice programs is the inclusion of local personnel as inservice presenters or resource persons when they possess the needed competencies. Nearly three-fourths of the U.S. superintendents reported the use of teachers in conducting inservice, when they possessed needed competencies, compared to only one-fourth of the English respondents.

Administrative support is also a major component of effective inservice. Teachers in the U.S. were more likely to be provided with materials and guidelines following inservice sessions. In fact, nearly 75 percent of the U.S. superintendents reported that teachers were provided with support/guidelines following inservice; this compared to only 20 percent of the English sample providing such support. However, administrative support did not transfer into follow-up discussions with teachers. A follow-up session to discuss implementation was not high in either country. Over 37 percent of the U.S.

superintendents and 11 percent of the English respondents reported that follow-up sessions were scheduled to discuss implementation of inservice concepts.

Modification of teacher behavior was not reported as an essential part of inservice. Only 40 percent of the U.S. sample and 32 percent of the English respondents reported that modification of teacher behavior was an essential part of inservice.

Based upon the data, it is evident that inservice practices could be greatly improved in both countries. Instructional leadership has often been the missing link in providing quality inservice and the results of this study seem to support this assertion. Most administrators have either failed to supervise or failed to recognize that inservice continues after the initial session.

The government in the United Kingdom has made concerted efforts to provide inservice for teachers. In many ways, efforts in both nations have been responses to declining economies and criticism about the quality of education in the two countries. In a 1983 White Paper entitled "Teaching Quality", the English government expressed the view that inservice was an important component in teacher career development. A circular distributed in June, 1986, entitled "Better Schools", noted the government plan was intended to help LEAs (Local Education Authority) organize inservice more systematically to meet national and local training needs and priorities. This circular identified four general pricnciples and nineteen national priority areas. The

principles included:

1) To promote the professional development of teachers...
2) To promote more systematic and purposeful planning to INSET [inservice training]...
3) To encourage more effective management of the teaching force...
4) To encourage training in selected areas which are to be accorded national priority...

Such intervention amounts to a desire on the part of the government to implement particular policies. This constitutes a contrast to the inservice models that developed which the government supported in the 1970's and early 1980's.

Government involvement and intervention in England has resulted in a more centralized approach which has led to conflict between the state government and the LEAs. This same pattern can be seen in the United States with many state governments mandating staff development or inservice plans, minimum competency testing, and developing centralized state curriculum plans.

Currently inservice in England is more diverse than before in location, types of courses, and the demands made upon teachers. The 1980's have seen growth of cooperation between local schools, LEAs, and course providing institutions. Strong commitment exists regarding school based inservice models. Consequently what emerges is a mismatch between the government direction to bring uniformity through centralized control of inservice and the continued growth of school based models resulting in wide diversification.

This study identified the strengths and weaknesses of programs in both countries. The following comparative findings briefly summarize a few of the major differences in inservice

practices:

- American districts were more likely to involve teachers in planning.
- American districts were more likely to utilize teacher evaluation as a source for selecting inservice topics.
- A needs assessment was more likely to be conducted in America.
- Inservice sessions were more likely to be conducted by American teachers when they possessed the necessary competencies.
- A much greater belief existed in the United States that inservice improved teacher instructional skills.
- American teachers were more likely to receive administrative support, materials, and guidelines following inservice. Less than 10% of the English respondents indicated administrative support was provided following inservice.
- New teachers were more likely to be inserviced in England. Yet mandatory teacher participation in inservice was more prevalent in the United States.
- University courses were more likely to be considered as inservice in England.

Work is needed in both countries to upgrade education and inservice. The total implementation of components that comprise effective inservice will have to be achieved for educational excellence through inservice to become a reality.

Staff development and inservice activities are realistic, achievable mechanisms to bring about educational improvement. Leaders have long embraced organizational development as a vehicle to maintain and improve employee skills. Educators must provide the necessary leadership to implement and sustain quality inservice programs. Above all, educators must realize that inservice is a mechanism comprised of a number of components that must work in unison to achieve the maximum effect.

FIGURE 1- PERCENTAGE SCORES OF INSERVICE PRACTICES IN UNITED STATES AND ENGLISH SCHOOLS AS PERCEIVED BY SCHOOL OFFICIALS.

	SURVEY QUESTION	UNITED STATES	ENGLAND
1.	Teachers are involved in planning inservice activities.	84.2	43.9
2.	Inservice develops teacher skills designed to increase student achievement.	77.2	54.3
3.	Modifications are made between inservice sessions based upon teacher feedback.	78.3	47.0
4.	Teachers are provided materials and guidelines following inservice activities.	74.9	19.5
5.	A needs assessment is conducted prior to inservice.	72.8	44.3
6.	Inservice sessions are conducted by teachers when they possess desired skills.	73.9	24.6
7.	Teachers are provided administrative support following inservice.	74.5	9.0
8.	There is a written inservice program with desired outcomes.	69.0	73.5
9.	Inservice has improved teacher instructional skills.	66.7	18.1
10.	Inservice involves hands-on-activities.	63.6	48.2
11.	Inservice is required for all new staff.	59.0	73.8
12.	Inservice is designed to meet individual teacher needs.	54.1	17.4
13.	Teachers have input into the time and place for inservice activities.	52.7	39.2
14.	University courses are considered as inservice.	52.7	72.6
15.	Inservice topics often originate from teacher evaluation.	44.0	19.8
16.	Modification of teacher behavior is an essential part of inservice.	40.1	31.7
17.	Inservice participation is mandatory.	41.2	3.1
18.	Follow-up sessions are organized to discuss implementation of inservice concepts.	37.2	10.7
19.	Incentives are provided to teachers utilizing inservice concepts.	29.4	9.0
20.	Inservice activities are evaluated based upon changed teacher behavior.	25.7	20.3

Ninety (90) educational administrators representing England participated in the study. The U.S. sample consisted of 184 districts. One hundred sixty-seven (167) of the districts were recommended by State Department of Education Officials in each of the fifty states. These districts were identified as having outstanding staff development/inservice programs. Seventeen (17) additional districts were recommended by the National Center for the Improvement of Learning and are included in the U.S. sample.

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